



Episode 1x21:
"CHAINS"

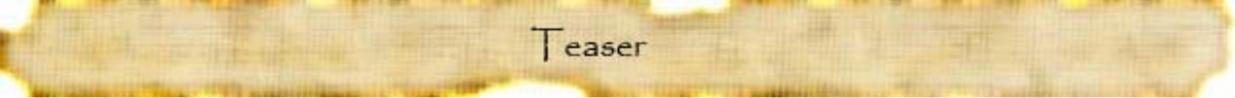
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Teaser

EXT. INDEPENDENCE – NIGHT – ESTABLISHING

The mining moon is dark and gray. A light rain falls. SERENITY sits at the MINE ENTRANCE, near a grouping of RUSTY BUILDINGS – barracks, warehouses, loading bays and offices. Banks of lights atop steel poles light the area from above.

INT. SERENITY CARGO BAY – CONTINUOUS

The cargo bay is filled by a few dozen LARGE SPOOLS OF CHAINS, massive enough that four people would be needed to roll them. The spools are strapped down, and JAYNE and BOOK are busy unfastening them. Kaylee stands on the UPPER catwalk, looking down.

KAYLEE

...pulleys and such. Big old pulleys for heftin' minin' equipment. That's gotta be what they're for, right?

JAYNE

I don't know. That's a lotta pulleys.

BOOK

Mines are deep, especially uranium ones. Some can go all the way to the core.

JAYNE

I know what I'd use chains for!
(lewd grin)
If you catch my meanin'.

KAYLEE

(giggling)
Jayne!

The sound of CLINKING CHAINS comes from the AIRLOCK RAMP, preceding two SECURITY GUARDS, followed by a group of sixteen RAGGED MEN, who are shackled about the ankles. The chain gang, looking wet and miserable, includes a TEENAGE BOY, and a MAN resting his hands on the boy's shoulders protectively. Behind this apparent father-son pair, an OLDER MAN makes eye contact with Book. A CROSS ON A THIN CHAIN hangs around his neck.

Book and Jayne exchange a look.

JAYNE

Seems I weren't too far off with the whole bondage-thing, Shepherd.

BOOK

Seems so.

INT. CHAVEZ'S OFFICE – SECONDS LATER

CHAVEZ, forties, short, mustachioed, stands before a window overlooking the slave barracks, loading bays, and mine entrance. Serenity can be seen, and the spools of chains are being rolled down the ramp by groups of ragged men.

Mal and Zoe look around the office, noticing a BROWNCOAT and INDEPENDENT FLAG displayed on one wall of the office.

CHAVEZ

Sergeant Malcolm Reynolds! And Zoe Alleyne! It is an honor to finally meet you both.

ZOE

It's Mrs. Washburne now.

MAL

And Captain Reynolds. Or Mister Reynolds. Or Mal, if you consider me a friend. As far as Sergeant Reynolds...

(looks at the flag)

War's over, Mr. Chavez. Ain't no use clingin' onto old titles.

CHAVEZ

Please, call me Luis.

(looks to the flag)

And you are right. Old titles... We should be rid of them. But old ideals, they never die.

MAL

Like freedom?

CHAVEZ

Yes. That's what this place is all about. Independence. Freedom from the Alliance.

MAL

Freedom period's what I fought for.

(beat)

Ain't no man oughta live under the heel of another.

Chavez smiles.

CHAVEZ

I assume you are referring to my workforce?

MAL

Am I? Don't believe I mentioned them. Should I have?

Chavez sits down behind his desk and reclines.

CHAVEZ

Have you heard of the term "chain gang?"

EXT. LOADING BAYS – SAME TIME

A HARD-LOOKING MAN strains as he works on rolling a chain spool across the concrete. Other SLAVES push and pull against the spools.

CHAVEZ (cont'd, VO)

It's a term from Earth-that-Was. For a time, prisoners – murderers, rapists, thieves – were strung together in chains, and they worked the fields, or dug ditches along lonely roads. They were forced to do something that benefited the societies they victimized.

INT. CHAVEZ'S OFFICE – SAME TIME

Mal stands at the window looking down at the loading bays.

MAL

Don't look like all the men down there meet that description. Some look to be victims themselves. Wrong place at the wrong time... Like maybe when a slaver ship comes avisitin'.

Chavez rises in his chair and looks out the window.

CHAVEZ

The men you see out there, they are not slaves. They once filled our prisons and asylums, rotting in their cells. Of no benefit to society.

INT. SERENITY – CARGO BAY – SAME TIME

The teenage boy pulls against a spool. Jayne and Book watch the slaves work. The guards, having a side conversation, seem less concerned about watching the slaves

than about making sure they don't have to do any work themselves. KAYLEE is in the cargo bay as well, looking down from the UPPER CATWALK.

CHAVEZ (cont'd, VO)

Now they work here, in the mines.

Kaylee looks at the teenage boy. He looks back up at her.

INT. CHAVEZ'S OFFICE – SAME TIME

Mal doesn't look at Chavez.

MAL

To benefit you.

CHAVEZ

The fuel mined here benefits all of us. It powers the transport ships, like yours, that knit our society together. You, my friend, will directly benefit, unless you do not want to be paid?

MAL

My understandin' was this deal was a trade.

CHAVEZ

Yes. New chains for our used mining machinery and equipment. You have a buyer lined up?

MAL

Not that it's any o'your business, but, yeah. Friends in need. If this machinery doesn't operate to their satisfaction...

INT. SERENITY – CARGO BAY – SAME TIME

The older man and a group of slaves push a MINING DRILL atop a PNEUMATIC CART into place. The spools of chains gone. The guards are now talking to Book and Jayne, pretty much completely ignoring the slaves.

CHAVEZ (VO)

I assure you, with some minor maintenance, they'll run like new for years and years.

MAL (VO)

You sure? Looks like you've got a corrosion problem.

The older man throws a switch on the pneumatic cart and the mining drill drops hard.

CHAVEZ (VO)

Everything rusts on this moon. The constant rain. Drill bits dull. Rusty chains break...

The panel covering the SMUGGLING COMPARTMENT shifts in response to the dropping drill. The older man notices, and smiles.

INT. CHAVEZ'S OFFICE – SAME TIME

Chavez walks back behind his desk, but remains standing.

CHAVEZ (cont'd)

In my experience, repairing chains is the cost effective alternative.

MAL

I see your point. Machines need fixin' when they break down. Hard working men... All they need's a hole in the ground. And you got plenty'a holes here, don't ya?

Chavez smiles politely.

CHAVEZ

I see we will not be friends, Mister Reynolds.

(beat, as Mal does not respond)

I hope we can work together again. Not many ships come out this far.

MAL

Figured you'd like it that way.

CHAVEZ

Freedom has its sacrifices.

MAL

That it does.

Mal heads toward the door, signalling for Zoe to join him.

MAL (cont'd)

Better pray for a drought.

INT. SERENITY – CARGO HOLD – NIGHT

Mal and Zoe walk up the ramp. Book and Jayne are finishing securing the mining machinery. Mal stops at the console, closes the cargo bay ramp door, and speaks into the comm.

MAL (cont'd)

Wash! Get us off this rock!

(beat)

Ain't nothin' right about this place, and the faster we're gone, the better.

Mal and Zoe walk toward the stairs to the catwalk.

JAYNE

Coin is coin, Mal. This was the easiest job we done in a long time.

Mal, halfway up the stairs, turns.

MAL

You call lookin' in those eyes easy?

JAYNE

Ain't like we're lockin' them chains ourselves.

Mal's now on the upper catwalk. He looks down at Jayne.

MAL

What part ain't you hearin'? We ain't comin' back. Ever.

Mal and Zoe continue on toward the bridge. They pass RIVER, who's leaning against the hull with her eyes closed.

RIVER

Twenty-nine... twenty-eight...

BACK ON THE CARGO BAY FLOOR

Jayne and Book are finished securing the machinery. They head up the stairs themselves. The sound of the ENGINES thrums through the walls.

JAYNE

Shepherd, I ain't the sharpest knife t'ever slit a throat, but this ain't smart, is it? Turnin' down honest work?

BOOK

Easy doesn't mean honest. You know that. And as they say, if you can't do something smart, for whatever reason, do something right.

They pass River, who finally stops counting down and opens her eyes.

RIVER

Ready or not here I come!

River makes her way down the stairs, eyes alert.

She walks amongst the secured machinery, head tilted, listening.

A SOFT WHISPER rises from the rattling quiet. She doubles back towards the sound.

RIVER

Rabbits don't pray. Rabbits are prey...

River approaches the hull and the smuggling compartment. She pulls free the panel and looks inside.

SIMON enters the cargo bay and sees his sister.

SIMON

River? What are you doing?

RIVER

(looks at Simon)

They once were lost...

She looks back to the compartment, smiling, as Simon walks over to join her.

A group of four slaves are huddled together in the smuggling compartment, hands folded in prayer. The teenage boy, his father, the hard-looking man, and the older man are in the compartment. They look back at Simon with wide eyes.

RIVER (cont'd)

Now they're found.

Act One

INT. SERENITY – CARGO BAY – MOMENTS LATER

Zoe and Jayne, weapons drawn, flank the four slaves, who stand near the cargo bay doors. Mal faces the slaves, his arms crossed. Book, Simon and River are on the cargo bay floor as well, watching from among the machines. Throughout the scene, River does not take her eyes off the older man.

Kaylee's on the upper catwalk. INARA joins her, looking down.

INARA

What's this?

KAYLEE

We got passengers. Sort of.

(beat)

Poor things.

ON THE CARGO BAY FLOOR

Mal steps closer to the slaves.

MAL

Tell me why I shouldn't turn about and bring you back.

OLDER MAN

You said yourself you're not going back.

MAL

That was before I found out I got stowaways on my boat.

OLDER MAN (ISAAC)

My name is Isaac.

(indicates the hard-looking man)

This stowaway is Derek. The boy's name is Joshua, and his father is Micah.

Derek steps protectively in front of Isaac, but the older man waves him back.

MAL

I don't need to know your names.

ISAAC

I believe you do.

MAL

Knowin' your names don't change a thing.

JOSHUA

It don't?

A beat.

MAL

Don't they do some kinda roll call? What they gonna do when they don't hear your names? Put two and two together?

ISAAC

It won't matter.

MAL

Trouble comes my way, threatens me and my crew, you and yours're goin' out those doors. Steppin' out or sucked out, makes no difference to me.

ISAAC

You won't have to do that.

Derek looks around, taking careful notice of the women. Zoe sees what he's doing and tightens the grip on her gun.

MAL

(shakes his head)

Got confidence, I'll give you that.

ISAAC

Not confidence, Captain. Faith.

MAL

Best put your faith in someone else, 'cause I ain't—

ISAAC

Not in you. In God.

Book reacts with interest, and walks closer.

JAYNE

Usin' his name with the Cap'n, old man – in vain or otherwise - weren't very smart.

ISAAC

(to Jayne)

But it is right.

Jayne reacts.

JAYNE
You listen in on everything we said?

ISAAC
(to Mal)
Someone was.

MAL
From the Lord's lips to your ear, that the way of it?

Isaac doesn't answer. His gaze does not waver.

MAL (cont'd)
You got the wrong man.

ISAAC
I believe you are exactly the right man. You will deliver us from evil.

Jayne laughs.

ISAAC
(continues as if he didn't hear)
It's in your heart. You are the one.

MAL
No, old man. Believe me.

ISAAC
It's in your ship's name.
(closes his eyes)
"Lord, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

JAYNE
Hey! My poppa said that prayer all the time!

Not surprisingly, everyone ignores him.

ISAAC
God has granted you this ship, Captain. I can see your courage. But do you have the wisdom to go with it?

Mal and Isaac stare at each other for a beat, then the COMM spark to life.

WASH (via comm)
Captain, you better get up here.

INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – SAME TIME

WASH pilots the ship and speaks into the internal COMM.

WASH (cont'd, into comm)
Got a wave coming in. It's Chavez. He doesn't sound happy. I don't think he's calling to invite us back for pie and a puppet show.

INT. SERENITY – CARGO BAY – SAME TIME

Mal looks at Isaac.

MAL
Must've missed your names after all.

ISAAC
Must have.

Mal stares into Isaac's eyes.

MAL
Kaylee!

KAYLEE
Cap'n?

MAL
Take 'em back to the engine room. Cut off their chains.

KAYLEE
(smiling)
You got it.

ISAAC
Thank you, Captain.

MAL
Don't thank me. I ain't no deliverer. You're off my boat at our next stop.

INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – NIGHT

Wash pilots the ship as Mal talks to Chavez via the comm console.

MAL

Mister Chavez. Those shiny chains couldn't've rusted through already?

CHAVEZ

I believe you know the reason for this wave. You have some of my property in your possession.

MAL

The mining equipment? Deal's a deal—

CHAVEZ

Don't patronize me.

MAL

No patronizing goin' on on my end. None of your property's on my boat, is all.

CHAVEZ

You have my slaves.

Wash doesn't look up from the controls.

WASH

He seems like a fun boss.

MAL

You see, Mister Chavez, that's where you and I don't see eye to eye. People ain't property. Ever. Might be the only thing me an' the Alliance agree on.

CHAVEZ

Do you really believe the Alliance cares about my little moon? Or my people? See no evil, Mister Reynolds. That is their way.

MAL

Exactly. Now if you'll excuse me, I'd like to not hear none of it, either. That's my way.

Mal reaches to switch off the monitor.

CHAVEZ

This isn't ov—

The screen goes dark.

WASH

That went well. No worse than usual, really.

MAL

We finish the job, Wash. Full burn to Haven. An' keep an eye out for trouble.

WASH

(into comm)

Kaylee? You in the engine room? Go to full burn.

EXT. SPACE

Serenity's tail lights up bright and the ship streaks off into space.

INT. SERENITY – ENGINE ROOM – NIGHT

The engine room is lit golden with the power of the engine running at full burn. Kaylee lets go of the large lever switch. She's wearing BLACK GOGGLES high on her head and picks up a HANDHELD CUTTING TORCH (currently unlit). Isaac is in the engine room with her, shackles still around his ankles. Near his feet is a pile of discarded chains and shackles. Zoe stands with arms crossed in the doorway.

ISAAC

Wow. That was exciting. "Let your light so shine..."

KAYLEE

"So... so that they may see your good works."

ISAAC

Very good! So you know the Bible?

KAYLEE

Was church'd as a kid. Sunday school and such. I guess some of it stuck.

(indicates his shackles)

Now, let's get those things off you.

ISAAC

I can tell, you know.

She looks at him curiously.

ISAAC (cont'd)

That some of it stuck. There is love here.

(touches the walls)

There are other things as well, but what holds it all together is love. I can see it in this room. The beating heart of the ship.

(points to the shiny new engine parts)

The wounds that have been patched and mended.

Kaylee looks back.

KAYLEE

Oh that?

CLOSE ON – INERTIAL DAMPENER

KAYLEE (cont'd)

That ain't fixed outta love, but necessity. We'd all've been red splotches on the walls a few seconds ago without it.

Kaylee covers her eyes with the goggles and lights the torch. As she leans over by Isaac's shackles, River appears outside the doorway, eyes wide. Zoe notices. Isaac does as well. Their eyes meet.

KAYLEE (cont'd)

Don't look into the light.

ISAAC

(whisper)

I already have.

INT. SERENITY – INARA'S SHUTTLE – SAME TIME

Mal walks into Inara's shuttle. Inara is beginning to pack up her things, but much of the shuttle is still draped with tapestries. She ignores him and continues her work.

MAL

No comments about not knocking this time?

INARA

You keep reminding me it's not my shuttle anymore, Mal. You returned my deposit. It's your shuttle again.

MAL

So no more banter? No more fights? Don't seem right.

INARA

Yes, what will you do with yourself when you can't use the "w" word at least once a week?

MAL

Ah, the seven "wh's." Who, what, when, where, why, how, and—

INARA

(amused)

That'll be enough, Captain. Is there a reason for today's intrusion?

Mal walks to one of the tapestries and studies it.

MAL

Gonna ask you to stick to the shuttle 'til we hit Haven. These men ain't seen a woman in who knows how long. That plus a Companion ain't a good cocktail.

INARA

I can take care of myself. Still, your concern is almost touching.

MAL

Yeah, well, it ain't all selfless. I was hopin' you'd keep an eye on River, too. I'd like to keep these folk contained in the passenger quarters—don't want 'em wand'rin' about—and you throw a crazy girl in the mix—that cocktail might just become jet fuel.

INARA

It's your shuttle. As you're so fond of telling me.

MAL

I know. But I'm still askin'.

She nods.

INARA

You're doing a good thing, Mal. Slavery is a horrible business.

MAL

People for sale.

(looks directly into her eyes)

Ain't never right.

EXT. SPACE

FOUR SLAVER SHIPS cut their way through space, looking sinister and gothic. The DUNGEON SHIP is five times Serenity's size, slow, laden, as if weighed down by the many slaves it can carry.

It's preceded by three OUTRIDERS. These mismatched ships are much smaller and faster. They bob and weave like a pack of wolves protecting the dungeon ship.

CLOSE ON – ONE OF THE OUTRIDERS.

INT. SLAVER OUTRIDER – BRIDGE – NIGHT

The slaver ship bridge is dark, tight, and cluttered with remote sensing equipment. FOUR SLAVERS track ships paths across space, presumably scanning for a good catch, while CAPTAIN LACHLAN eats an apple at the helm. One of the young slavers, JESSE, turns in his chair.

JESSE
Got a wave comin' in.

Lachlan rises in his chair and stands behind Jesse, looking over his shoulder.

LACHLAN
Chavez?! Bring him up, Jesse.

Chavez's angry face fills the screen.

LACHLAN (cont'd)
Thought I told you I never wanted to see your face again.

CHAVEZ
I've got a job for you, Lachlan. Assuming your "Admiral" can spare you.

LACHLAN
Huh, that's real funny now. Thought I also told you we'd never work for you again, neither.

CHAVEZ
You'll want this job.

LACHLAN
Seems to me, last job we done for you on Haven lost me my favorite cousin.

CHAVEZ
You want the ship that shot her down?

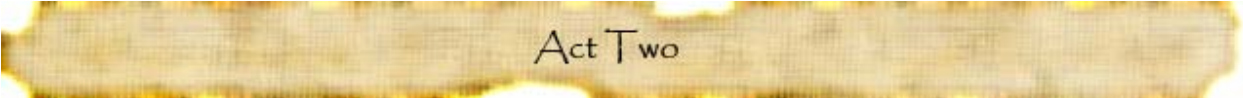
LACHLAN
(eyes brightening)
What did you say?

CHAVEZ
Firefly class transport ship – with no gun this time, I can assure you – just left Independence with some of my workforce. I want them back, along with everyone else on board.

LACHLAN
How do you know it's them?

CHAVEZ
They need to offload some mining equipment to people the self-righteous <monkey penis> of a captain called "friends in need." My guess is they're on the way back to Haven right now.

Jesse looks at Lachlan and smiles. Lachlan takes a bite out of his apple.



Act Two

EXT. SPACE – ESTABLISHING

Serenity glides through space.

INT. SERENITY – INFIRMARY – NIGHT

Jayne, Derek, and Isaac stand outside the infirmary, looking in at Simon examining Joshua. Micah is also in the infirmary. As Isaac looks around, studying the interior of the ship, Derek indicates the weapon on Jayne's hip.

DEREK
That a Tienamin twenty millimeter Model Forty-Seven?

JAYNE
That's right. You get all that from the handle?

DEREK
It's the shape of the grip, and the whale-bone inlay. It's beautiful.

Jayne pats the gun proudly.

JAYNE

She sure is.

DEREK

She?

JAYNE

Name's Ana. Just picked her up at the Carousel.

IN THE INFIRMARY

Simon finishes up examining Joshua.

SIMON

Your body-fat content is a little low, but nothing a few good meals in a row won't fix.

MICAH

Thank you, Doctor Tam.

SIMON

There's a small shower near the guest rooms. Some of the crew have donated their allotment to you all. Help yourself.

MICAH

Thank you for all you've done for my family. God bless you.

Micah and Joshua exit the infirmary, almost bumping into Jayne.

MICAH

God bless you.

JAYNE

Uh... Thanks.

Simon looks toward the door, preparing for the next examination. He indicates the next patient should come in. Derek looks to Isaac, and Isaac nods. Derek walks in.

SIMON

Take off your shirt and take a seat.

Derek takes off his shirt. There are long scars across his back. Jayne reacts to the sight. Across his upper right shoulder is a tattoo, with a serial number and "bar code" scanning pattern. Derek sits, and he and Simon talk as the doctor checks him over with various medical instruments (drawing blood, checking blood pressure and such).

DEREK

I s'pose you're worried about the tattoo.

SIMON

Should I be? It doesn't look to be infected.

DEREK

You know what I mean, doc. Did some time on Sheol.
Made a mess a things for myself there. So much so's they
sold me to Independence. Acted up there s'well.

Derek indicates Isaac, who is in the doorway, studying Jayne, while Jayne simply glares at him.

DEREK (cont'd)

Be dead right now if it weren't for him. That man's
connected to somethin' Almighty. Saw right inside of me.
Showed me the way. Showed me it's not too late for a
man to change, if he lets God do the changin'.

SIMON

(checking Derek's scalp)

Well, you're in for a bit more change, I'm afraid. You've
got a case of the scalp mites. It's not too bad, but you're
going to have to lose the hair.

DEREK

Not a problem. Been done before.

SIMON

Let me check your friend first. If he's got them too, I'll
shave both of you together.

At Simon's prompting, Derek gets up from the chair, and walks toward the door as Isaac steps cautiously into the room. As Derek nears Jayne, Jayne backs away.

JAYNE

Stay right there, bughead. I like my hairstyle just fine,
thank you.

Isaac sits in the chair. His eyes dart around the room. He is tense, agitated, perhaps even frightened. Simon begins to examine his scalp.

IN THE HALLWAY

River arrives, walking up next to Jayne, and looking in at Isaac. Derek checks her out in quick glances.

BACK INSIDE

SIMON

Is something wrong, Isaac?

ISAAC

Don't like doctor's rooms. Never have. Light's too cold and harsh.

SIMON

It is, but it's perfect for spotting imperfections. Like bugs...

IN THE HALLWAY

Derek looks River up and down. Jayne notices.

JAYNE

(quietly)

You don't want that. She's all kinds of crazy. Gut you soon as grapple.

DEREK

Wasn't lookin'. Wasn't wantin'.

JAYNE

Right.

DEREK

Tryin' not to, anyways...

Jayne grins, Derek does not, while

IN THE INFIRMARY

Simon uncovers a STRANGE CIRCULAR SCAR near Isaac's temple. Simon touches it with his forefinger.

ISAAC

(flinching away)

No! Don't touch it!

SIMON

Does it hurt?

ISAAC

(calming)

No. It's just sensitive.

Simon continues to examine Isaac's scalp, moving directly to the other temple, where there's an identical scar.

SIMON

Where did you get them?

River speaks from the doorway.

RIVER

Fingers. Fingers of fire touched him. Burned his old self away. Like a lump of bronze inside his head.

Isaac looks at River. He smiles.

ISAAC

That's... That's right, child.
(to Simon)

It's where the hands of God touched me. Purified my mind. Made me see.

Derek nods and smiles. Simon only stares at River, who stares at Isaac.

INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – NIGHT

Mal's at the wave monitor, talking to MILDRED, late thirties, matronly, no-nonsense, from the mining colony on Haven.

MILDRED (on the monitor)

They got skills, they'll have work. Can't guarantee much coin, but they'll have a roof over their heads, three squares, and the freedom to stay or leave as they choose.

MAL

You sure about this? Slaves can be troublesome folk. Criminals and such.

MILDRED (on the monitor)

Haven's a place where people come to change, Mal. Get a fresh start. Some folk just need a second chance. Lord knows I did.

(beat)

'Sides, they probably know how to use the mining equipment you're sellin' better'n anyone.

MAL

Tell Bernabe he married a helluva human being, Mildred, and ruffle the little ones' hair for me.

MILDRED (on the monitor)
I'll see you tomorrow.

Mal switches off the monitor. Simon is in the doorway.

MAL
How'd the examin'in' go?

SIMON
As expected. They're all malnourished. One had a mild case of scalp mites.

MAL
Get a chance to hone your barberin' skills?

SIMON
Only if you want a shaved head.
(beat)
I think one of our guests has done time in an asylum.

MAL
The preacher-man?
(off Simon's nod)
Figures.

SIMON
He has scars. They look similar to ones left behind after focused microwave-lobotomies.

Simon pauses. He is uncomfortable.

MAL
What ain't you tellin' me, doctor?

SIMON
The scars are similar to River's.

MAL
You sayin' we got another reader on board?

SIMON
We don't know River's a reader.

Mal let's it go. He stands.

MAL
What you say's true, might be best we keep them apart.
No tellin' what might happen those two get to talkin'.
Where's she now?

SIMON
Getting her things together.

INT. SERENITY – CARGO BAY – SAME TIME

River, happy and excited, runs down the catwalk from Inara's shuttle. She passes Jayne and Derek (now bald), who are lifting weights together on the bench press, Derek spotting. Jayne burns out, unable to lift the weight, but Derek is distracted, watching River. Joshua and Kaylee play a game on the catwalk above. We follow River through the cargo bay to the quarters

OUTSIDE THE INFIRMARY

Where Wash and Zoe chat with Micah. River continues on toward the guest quarters. In the hallway stands Isaac, his hair wet, a towel draped over his shoulder.

ISAAC
It is kind of you making room for me and my friends. Do you need some help?

RIVER
I'm going to a sleep-over. Her bed smells like rose petals!
(whispering)
Can't let Jayne and Derek see the pillow fights.

ISAAC
(whispering back)
Your secret's safe with me.

River moves past him into her room. Isaac follows. Zoe notices, and keeps an eye on them.

IN THE TAMS' ROOM

River packs away her things as if moving for a week.

ISAAC
What is your name, little one?

RIVER
River.

ISAAC
Of course. A name of transformation. Of travel. Of renewal and life. Do you know my Lord received his inheritance from God in a river?

RIVER
The dove fell down.

ISAAC
That's right. Tell me, River, have you received the blessings of your inheritance?

RIVER
Only swans.

ISAAC
You have been transformed, haven't you?

RIVER
Ugly duckling.

ISAAC
There is a place for you with me, River. I can help you understand who you are.

She stops packing and turns to look at him. They stare at each other for a beat, then Simon comes in, looking very uncomfortable at the scene.

SIMON
River?

RIVER
I'm ready!

SIMON
Go put the rest of your things in the shuttle, and meet me in the galley.

River exits the room with her things. Isaac looks at Simon.

SIMON (cont'd)
Shepherd Book has prepared a meal for us.

INT. SERENITY – GALLEY – NIGHT

With the crew and the slaves, it's more crowded than usual at the table. Jayne and Derek seem to be getting along, laughing and joking. Isaac and River make eye contact on occasion, and she often stares at him when he's not looking.

MAL

(to Isaac)

Just got done talkin' to a friend of mine. Runs a mine on Haven, where we're headed. Says they'll take you all in. Set you up with honest work.

KAYLEE

That's great!

None of the freed slaves answer. They all look to Isaac.

KAYLEE (cont'd)

Well, isn't it?

MAL

Don't all thank me at once.

ISAAC

We do thank you for the gesture, but I'm afraid our journey has just begun.

MAL

Not on my boat, it hasn't. Haven's your next stop.

ISAAC

That is not God's will.

MAL

Here we go again...

ISAAC

You will deliver us into the hands of God. The promised land awaits us. He has told me this.

MAL

I ain't runnin' no bus service to paradise. 'Sides, I don't seem to remember a planet or moon with such a name.

DEREK

Isaac wasn't given a name. He was given numbers. Five-two-zero-one—

MAL

That's enough! Now everyone just be quiet!

The table is silent for a beat. Two beats.

MAL (cont'd)

You hear that? That's right. Nothin' but the sound of the engines. Creak of the steel. Your own breath. Nothin' else. God don't talk.

ISAAC

How do you know when you don't listen?

MAL

You don't know nothin' about me, preacher-man.

ISAAC

God has chosen you, Captain.

MAL

Well, I don't choose him. Not no more. And I sure ain't gonna choose to plug in a set of dreamed-up coordinates and see where they lead.

(gets up from the table)

Haven's your next stop. Best you all get some shut-eye.

INT. SERENITY – CARGO BAY – NIGHT

Isaac paces amid the mining machinery. His hands are folded beneath his chin in prayer. Serenity is still and quiet. Zoe watches from the door to the infirmary. Book appears behind her.

BOOK

He still going strong?

ZOE

Been praying near two hours now.

BOOK

Why haven't you interrupted him? He can pray in his room. I do.

ZOE

Probably feels safer here in familiar surroundings than in another cage. I figure it's best to let him tire himself out. No need to get him worked up again.

Zoe looks back towards the pacing Isaac.

BOOK

Why don't you get some rest? I can take it from here.

ZOE

You sure?

Book nods and smiles. Zoe smiles and walks away. Once she's gone, Book approaches Isaac, who stops praying and smiles.

ISAAC

I didn't thank you for the wonderful meal, Shepherd.

BOOK

It was my pleasure, brother.

ISAAC

(looking about the room)

It's peaceful here.

BOOK

It can be. At times.

Isaac touches the mining machinery.

ISAAC

Do you believe in coincidences, Shepherd?

BOOK

One man's coincidence is another man's evidence.

ISAAC

True enough. What kind of man are you?

BOOK

Honestly, I don't know anymore.

ISAAC

If that's the case, I'll be on the side of evidence for us both...

Book smiles. Isaac looks away from him, staring at the mining equipment.

ISAAC (cont'd)

I've seen too much for it to be coincidence. The mines...

They were hell. Wailing and gnashing of teeth...

(looks away)

God pulled me from that pit, Shepherd. But this serenity is temporary. His will is not done.

BOOK

It never is, Isaac. I know He wants us to keep going. Keep walking with Him. But truly, I feel I'm stumbling more than walking, more every day. Sometimes it's so dark, I don't know where my path is leading, but I trust it's where He wants me to be.

ISAAC

You doubt the path you've chosen?

BOOK

No. These are good folk. All of them.

ISAAC

Even a man who hates God?

BOOK

Captain doesn't hate God. He's just... lost.

ISAAC

As are we all.

(beat)

God has brought me this far, and I know He wants me to go farther. But I don't see how.

BOOK

If it's His will, He will make a way.

ISAAC


God bless you, Shepherd. You're right...

INT. SERENITY – ENGINE ROOM – SAME TIME

The shiny new INERTIAL DAMPENER sparks and crackles in a way it was clearly not designed to do. A thin plume of smoke rises.

ISAAC (cont'd, VO)

God will make a way.



Act Three

EXT. SPACE

Serenity approaches Haven, the brightest star in the distance.

INT. SERENITY – PASSENGER DORMS – MORNING

Isaac, Derek, Micah and Joshua stand in the hall in a circle, hands clasped.

ISAAC

Serenity will deliver us into the hands of God and to the promised land, my children. I have foreseen it.

DEREK

The captain won't submit to God's will, Isaac.

MICAH

Derek may be right. We cannot rely on the captain. Perhaps we will find transport at this mining colony?

ISAAC

Don't lose faith, Micah. Wait on the Lord. Wait on a sign...

EXT. SPACE ABOVE HAVEN – LATER

Serenity is moments away from entering orbit.

INT. SERENITY – PASSENGER DORM – MORNING

Isaac kneels in prayer in his room. The door opens and Book looks in.

BOOK

We're approaching Haven, Isaac.

ISAAC

(opening his eyes)

Thank you, Shepherd.

Isaac continues praying.

INT. SERENITY – CARGO BAY – SAME TIME

Kaylee, River and Joshua play jacks.

INT. SERENITY – INARA'S SHUTTLE – SAME TIME

Inara straightens her room. Pillows lay on the floor, and she breaks down a makeshift fort made from her tapestries. She shakes her head, smiling.

INT. SERENITY – GALLEY – SAME TIME

Micah, Simon, Jayne and Derek play cards at the kitchen table, Jayne with a large mug of steaming coffee. We continue on into

THE FOREDECK HALL

Where Zoe climbs out of her room and makes her way to

THE BRIDGE

Where Mal looks out at Haven, looming larger now, the sun disappearing behind it. Wash is at the controls, and both are drinking coffee with cupped hands.

WASH

—have to disagree, Mal. She may be my wife, but Jayne's is better. The man knows how to make a pot of—

(sees Zoe enter the bridge)

—gold! Hi, honey!

(back to Mal)

The man is a regular leprechaun. With a pituitary disorder, nonetheless...

ZOE

Please. I know Jayne's coffee is better.

(takes Wash's cup and drinks)

Mornin', sir.

MAL

It's evenin' where we're headed.

ZOE

That's a shame. Bernabe and Millie's kids'll be sleeping.

Won't get my fix.

(to Wash)

Wouldn't need to hold other folk's babies if someone would get on top of things...

Mal takes a drink of his coffee, averting his eyes.

WASH

Right now? Again? You know I do like to be on top...

(beat)

Of things. Like flying the ship. Which I'll get back to now.

Wash takes hold of the controls and presses a button. A grinding, thrumming noise sounds throughout the ship as Mal and Zoe rock forward, grabbing at the console for balance. Wash's dinosaurs spill all over the deck as his chest presses into the controls.

INT. SERENITY – GALLEY – SAME TIME

The stack of cards fan out across the table, and Jayne spills his coffee on his hand.

JAYNE
Ruttin' hell!

INT. SERENITY – INARA'S SHUTTLE – SAME TIME

Inara is packing her things away in crates. They slide across the deck as she spills to the floor.

INT. SERENITY – CARGO BAY – SAME TIME

The ball and jacks roll quickly through the cargo bay towards the airlock door.

INT. SERENITY – PASSENGER DORM – SAME TIME

Isaac, kneeling in prayer, is thrown forward into his bed. He opens his eyes, and his cross rises with the inertia before his eyes, held fast to his neck by its chain.

ISAAC
It is time.

INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – SECONDS LATER

Mal steadies himself.

WASH
(making adjustments)
Whoa. Whoa, darlin'.

MAL
What is that? Is that what I think it is? Because it better not be.

ZOE
Didn't we just replace the inertial dampener?

WASH (into comm)
Kaylee? What's goin' on back there?

INT. SERENITY – AFT HALL – SAME TIME

Kaylee struggles up the stairs to the aft hall, stumbling into Book on the way.

KAYLEE
Sorry, Shepherd.

BOOK
Kaylee? What's—

But Kaylee's off down the hallway to

THE ENGINE ROOM

Where she makes straight for the shiny new parts. She inspects the INERTIAL DAMPENER.

KAYLEE
<Can't we ever catch a break!> Gorram it, work!

She bangs the part with her fist in frustration, pulling her hand back reflexively because the part is hot – shorted out. As she smacks it, smoke rises.

KAYLEE (into comm)
It's the inertial dampener again, Wash!

INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – SAME TIME

Wash struggles with the controls. Haven is approaching too fast.

WASH
But it's brand new!
(beat)
Right?

MAL
<No good chicken-rutting bureaucrat!>
(to Zoe)
It's almost a shame Cariss is dead, 'cause I'd like to kill him again!

WASH
Cariss died? How did I miss that?

Mal and Zoe ignore the question.

WASH (cont'd)

I'm going to have to slow her down a lot slower, Mal.
Cargo we're carrying's too bulky to stay secure if I step
on the brakes enough to enter atmo on the first pass.

MAL

And on the second pass?

WASH

There's a lot of weight back there. No tellin' what the g-
forces will do.

MAL

Wash, enter Haven's orbit and tell 'em I'm on the way.
I'm gonna get us another gorram new part. Zoe, ship's
yours.

He rushes to the door, then pauses.

MAL (cont'd)

Til, ya know, I get back.

INT. SERENITY – GALLEY – SECONDS LATER

Mal enters, finding Simon checking the burn on Jayne's hand. Micah and Derek are
standing, and Book has joined them.

BOOK

What's going on, Captain?

MAL

(to Derek and Micah)

Looks like you two're on my boat for a little while longer.
I'm going planet-side to pick up a part. Any of you start
gettin' motion sick, make sure you yak in a bucket.

SIMON

Or just tell me. I've got pills for it.

MAL

Or that.

As Mal heads toward the stairs to the cargo bay. Derek and Micah share a look.

INT. SERENITY – CARGO BAY – SAME TIME

Joshua and River look for the ball, peering beneath the swaying mining equipment. Joshua finally spots it, on the other side of the mining drill. He circles around and finds Isaac crouched there, the ball now in his hand.

ISAAC

Found it, my son. Here...

Joshua comes close to get the ball and Isaac leans closer, whispering something in his ear. Joshua nods and runs off. Isaac turns around and sees River, looking right at him, smiling. He smiles in return and nods a greeting.

RIVER

You found me, but you didn't count in thousands. You cheated.

(stops smiling, backing away)

I should find a place to hide. Cover your eyes!

River runs away. Isaac watches her go.

INT. SERENITY – INARA'S SHUTTLE – DAY

Mal walks into the shuttle, failing to keep his balance, and tumbles onto Inara's bed. Inara stops straightening her things sent into disarray by the g-forces, pressing her hands against one of her crates.

MAL

(looking into the ceiling)

Never thought I'd get the chance to stare into this ceiling!

INARA

Mal!

Mal props himself up in the bed.

MAL

What? Ain't I fetchin'?

(beat)

Inertial dampener is on the fritz again.

He rolls off the bed to his feet and continues on into the cockpit.

MAL (cont'd)

I'm going to have to borrow my shuttle. If that's okay with you. Me usin' my own shuttle.

INARA

There's no need to keep reminding me.

Mal sits down behind the controls.

MAL

No remindin' goin' on here.

(looks at the controls with confusion)

Might just need a reminder myself, though. Did you make some modifications here?

INARA

I did no such thing!

(beat)

Why don't you use the other shuttle?

He doesn't look up, looking over the control panel with confusion.

MAL

Missed its last maintenance check—

(counting silently)

Its last four maintenance checks, with how busy Kaylee's been with the main engine. Don't want my dingy dead in the water, too. Now, where's the pre-flight diagnostic switch, then? Is this the one?

Inara sighs and pushes at Mal.

INARA

Let me do it. Go seal the hatch.

He stands up, letting her have the seat.

MAL

But this is the last time! I better find all my switches and levers back where they're supposed to be when you're gone...

EXT. SERENITY – SECONDS LATER

Inara's shuttle separates from Serenity and drops into Haven's atmosphere. Serenity continues its orbit around Haven, disappearing behind the moon. We swing around and see the approaching SLAVER OUTRIDER in the distance.

INT. SLAVER OUTRIDER – BRIDGE – SAME TIME

Lachlan stares at the scanning console, then looks up and out the window at Haven.

LACHLAN

Was that it? Don't tell me that was it.

JESSE

We got a partial scan before it disappeared behind the moon. Looks like a Firefly-class transport.

LACHLAN

Gorram it, we're too late! I ain't goin' to face that gun again!

JESSE

Scanners indicate it wasn't enterin' atmo. It's orbitin'.

LACHLAN

Plot an intercept course. Get the grapplers ready.

INT. SERENITY – GALLEY – DAY

Joshua finds Micah and whispers something in his ear. Micah looks to Derek and they look to Jayne, who is at the sink running his hand under water as Simon and Book stand near.

JAYNE

Ain't nothin', doc.

SIMON

It's blistering, Jayne.

JAYNE

I'm fine. Go check on your sister. She already bounces off the walls most days, no tellin' what she's like when she's actually bouncin' off walls.

BOOK

I'll go with you. I should see if Isaac is all right.

Book and Simon leave. Jayne, as if to prove something, snatches up what remains of his coffee and takes a cautious sip. Serenity rocks and it spills on his face.

JAYNE

(yelling toward the bridge)
Keep her still, little man!

INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – SAME TIME

Wash struggles with the controls. Zoe is right there with him.

WASH

When the ship's a rockin', don't come a knockin'.

(looks at a gauge)

We're at 3.2 times descent speed. Coming around our first, outer orbit...

The proximity alarm sounds. Wash looks to the sensors, his eyes widen, and he looks out the window.

WASH (cont'd)

And we've got an unidentified ship, dead ahead!

Zoe looks out through the window. The slaver outrider approaches.

WASH

Isn't that—?

ZOE

(nods)

Slavers. Seems Chavez sent out a call. Make me proud, baby.

WASH

We're not, you know, dampened, remember?

ZOE

I'm well aware.

(into comm)

Attention. We got incoming slavers. Strap yourselves in, because it's gonna be a bumpy ride.

INT. SERENITY – GALLEY – SAME TIME

Jayne looks at Derek, Micah, and Joshua, and points to the sitting area.

JAYNE

Go on in there, and belt yourselves in.

Jayne heads out toward the foredeck hall.

DEREK

Where you goin'?

JAYNE

Get me some assurance. Ain't goin' down without a fight.

Micah nudges Derek, who turns to see Isaac standing at the door to the aft hall, and, beyond, the engine room. Isaacs nods.

DEREK
Blessed assurance...
(turning back)
Wait! Let me help!

Derek races after Jayne while Micah belts Joshua in.

MICAH
Don't worry, my son. We'll be home soon.

INT. SERENITY – AFT HALL – SAME TIME

Isaac walks to the engine room door, through which Kaylee can be seen working on the inertial dampener.

INT. SERENITY – CARGO BAY – SAME TIME

Book and Simon have found River, hiding, pressed flat against the wall, behind mining equipment. The equipment rocks.

SIMON
River? Come out from behind there...

RIVER
(shaking her head)
No. No...

BOOK
Come, River, or you'll get squashed.

RIVER
We'll all get squashed... He'll squash all of us...

INT. SERENITY – ENGINE ROOM – SAME TIME

Isaac enters. Kaylee is surprised.

KAYLEE
Isaac? It's dangerous back here. Best you get belted in.

Isaac reaches down and picks up his shackles from the pile, holding them tight in both hands.

ISAAC
Belts. Chains. I intend to never be at their mercy ever again.

KAYLEE
Isaac, what're you doin'?

ISAAC
I need you to go to full burn.

INT. SERENITY – CARGO BAY – SAME TIME

Simon reaches forward. Book looks around, and retreats.

SIMON
Take my hand, *mei mei*.

RIVER
Can't let him find me... Finders keepers...

INT. SERENITY – JAYNE'S ROOM – SAME TIME

Jayne uncovers his WALL OF WEAPONS and starts sorting through. He looks at the gun he's wearing, Ana, and unholsters her, offering her to Derek.

JAYNE
Since you was admirin' her before.

DEREK
What about you?

JAYNE
Oh, I think Vera an' me's gonna have a dance.

Jayne smiles and reaches for VERA, the largest gun on the wall. As he does so, he notices a store of a dozen GRENADES. Derek does as well.

EXT. SPACE – ORBIT ABOVE HAVEN – SAME TIME

The slaver outrider closes in on Serenity.

INT. SLAVER OUTRIDER – BRIDGE –SAME TIME

Lachlan stands behind his PILOT. Jesse is nearby, behind the grappler controls.

LACHLAN

This is a grab-and-drag job. Don't puncture the hull. But if you do...

(shrugs)

Oh, well. Seeing them get sucked out into the black is worth the trip.

INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – SAME TIME

Zoe lets go of the comlink.

WASH

You get a wave through to the captain?

ZOE

Hope so.

Wash adjusts his grip of the controls. Zoe is strapped into the co-pilot's chair, holding its controls and looking a little on edge.

WASH

Honey, keep a loose grip. Only help me when I start squealing like a little girl.

ZOE

I'm here for you.

WASH

I hope everyone is strapped in, because I like it rough...

EXT. SPACE – ORBIT ABOVE HAVEN – SAME TIME

The slaver outrider ship charges. Serenity dives beneath it at the last second.

INT. SERENITY – CARGO BAY – SAME TIME

The ship tilts and Simon pulls on River, a heavy PIECE OF MINING MACHINERY slamming into the hull where she stood.

RIVER

Squashed. But not that way...

Serenity tilts again, and River and Simon fall to the side of the room in a jumble of limbs.

INT. SERENITY – ENGINE ROOM – SAME TIME

Kaylee looks at Isaac, a little nervous now.

KAYLEE

What—?

ISAAC

Go to full burn.

KAYLEE

Full burn? That's insane! Without the inertial dampener—

The ship tilts to the side, sending them both flying.

INT. SERENITY – JAYNE'S ROOM – SAME TIME

Jayne hefts one of the grenades and grins.

JAYNE

You know, I always forget I got these things...

The ship tilts to the side. As it does so, Derek slams into Jayne. Jayne drops both Vera and the grenade, grabbing the wall to keep his balance.

Derek flips the knife around and drives it THROUGH Jayne's left hand, pinning him to the wall.

Jayne howls in pain and anger. Before Jayne can recover, Derek unsheathes the knife from Jayne's belt and pins his right hand.

JAYNE

(shocked, looking at his pinned hands)

What in the hell're you doin'?

Derek picks up the grenade and pockets it. He also holsters Ana in his waistband, and grabs Vera.

DEREK

God's will.

(chambers the first round)

Now you know how my Lord felt the day he saved our sinful souls.

Act Four

EXT. SPACE– ORBIT ABOVE HAVEN

The slaver outrider ship chases a weaving Serenity above Haven.

INT. SERENITY – FOREDECK HALL – SAME TIME

Derek climbs the ladder out of Jayne's room to the sound of Jayne's SCREAMING. He shuts the door, silencing the screams, and turns to see Micah waiting for him. Derek passes Vera to Micah, and pulls Ana from his waist.

INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – SAME TIME

Zoe turns to see Derek and Micah on the bridge. She reaches for her gun, but Derek shakes his head, aiming Ana at her. Zoe eases back, raising her hands.

Wash glances behind and does a double-take.

DEREK

Pilot! I want you to plot a course!

WASH

I'm a little busy right now.

DEREK

Perhaps this will convince you...

(grabs the grenade from his pocket)

Now plot a course to the coordinates, given to Isaac by the hands of God. Five-two-zero...

INT. SERENITY – JAYNE'S ROOM – SAME TIME

Pinned to the wall, Jayne breathes heavily, looking from one bleeding hand to the other.

JAYNE

It's just hot coffee...

(steeling himself)

Just hot coffee...

He flexes his arms and pulls hard on his right hand. He GRUNTS and HISSES with the pain, but the knife comes with his hand out of the wall. His right arm free, he

breathes a sigh of relief. He raises his hand to his mouth, gritting his teeth around the knife's handle, preparing to pull.

INT. SERENITY – OUTSIDE INFIRMARY – SAME TIME

Simon belts River into a chair, and sits down and struggles to belt himself in.

INT. SERENITY – AFT HALL – SAME TIME

Book comes out of the stairwell, looks toward the galley, then back toward the engine room. He sees Isaac's back, and begins walking toward him.

INT. SERENITY – ENGINE ROOM – SAME TIME

Kaylee stands up in front of Isaac, trying to keep her distance. Isaac holds the chains taut between his fists.

KAYLEE

You don't understand. Inertial dampener's broke. That's why we're all... jumpy. Without this...

(holds up the inertial dampener)

...hooked up over there, we all get splattered against the stern the second we accelerate.

ISAAC

I know the laws of the 'Verse, my child. But don't you see? We are in the palm of God's guiding hands. We are protected.

KAYLEE

Ain't nothin' protectin' us but the safety protocols in the engine, and thank God an' good engineerin' for that.

BOOK (OS)

Isaac, what are you doing?

Isaac turns to see Book at the doorway. Isaac moves fast, rushing behind Kaylee and wrapping the chain around her throat. Kaylee wheezes.

BOOK (cont'd)

Isaac!

ISAAC

I'm just trying to do what He tells me to!

INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – SAME TIME

Zoe reacts as the image of a planet pops up on the navigation screen.

ZOE

These coordinates are for Whitefall.

Jayne stumbles into the bridge, visibly in pain, hands bleeding. Micah turns his gun on him.

JAYNE

Ain't nothin' much there but some dirt poor settlements
an' a crashed Reaver ship.

DEREK

God wants us there!

JAYNE

God sure ain't on Whitefall. The other guy, maybe.

DEREK

Plot the course, or I pull the pin!

Jayne stands tall and faces him.

JAYNE

Why? Cause some crazy old man says so?

(beat)

Pullin' that pin ain't no leap of faith. It's pure stupid
suicide. Ain't smart an' it ain't right!

Derek stares. Micah looks to be losing his nerve, staring at the gun in his hands, looking at Wash struggling with the controls, the ship tilting and swaying.

JAYNE (cont'd)

I know you wanna change. Wanna a fresh start. But it
ain't on Whitefall. It's right here. This boat can change a
man, if you let it.

(beat)

Now gimme my grenade.

Derek hesitates, but hands the grenade over. Jayne closes his bloody fist around the grenade and smiles through the pain. Derek smiles back. Then Jayne, in one swift move, swipes the gun from Derek with one hand and decks him with his grenade-closed fist. Jayne winces in pain as he does so.

Zoe is up with her gun drawn, pointing it at Micah, who drops his weapon. Derek looks up at Jayne from the floor.

JAYNE
Not sayin' I changed none...
(showing him the grenade)
Thou shalt not steal, <dumb-ass>!

INT. SERENITY – ENGINE ROOM – SAME TIME

Kaylee holds the inertial dampener tight and swings it up, striking Isaac in the face. She wrenches free of the chain, coughing and choking, and spills into Book's arms.

ISAAC
(looking to the engine)
Make a way, Lord!

He grabs two CONDUITS that connect to the inertial dampener, now hanging loose, and plugs them together.

Kaylee's eyes widen. Isaac grabs the LEVER to switch to full burn. Book rushes forward and slams into Isaac, pushing him free of the lever. They begin to struggle, punching and rolling.

INT. SLAVER OUTRIDER – BRIDGE – SAME TIME

The targeting computer lights up, a crosshairs glowing on the image of Serenity.

LACHLAN
Fire!

EXT. SPACE – ORBIT ABOVE HAVEN – SAME TIME

The slaver ship fires its grapples and they attach to Serenity, pulling tight.

INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – SAME TIME

Wash pulls hard against the controls to no avail.

WASH
We're hooked!
(screaming)
Zoe! I'm screaming like a little girl now!

But Zoe is on her feet and away from the co-pilot's seat. The ship lurches and tilts at a steep angle.

INT. SERENITY – ENGINE ROOM – SAME TIME

Book and Isaac are thrown into the engine. Isaac's head breaks their fall. They both fall to the floor.

INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – SAME TIME

Zoe and Jayne struggle to get to their feet. Derek and Micah are still on the floor. Wash continues to fight.

WASH
They're pulling us in!

INT. SLAVER OUTRIDER – BRIDGE – SAME TIME

Jesse turns in his seat.

JESSE
We have them.

LACHLAN
Fry 'em.

PILOT
Proximity alert!

LACHLAN
(looking forward)
Of course there's a proximity—
(smiles)
Well, would you look at that...

EXT. SPACE – ORBIT ABOVE HAVEN – SAME TIME

INARA'S SHUTTLE exits atmosphere, bearing down on the slaver ship and Serenity.

INT. INARA'S SHUTTLE – COCKPIT – SAME TIME

Mal stands behind Inara, who's at the controls.

MAL
Can't leave them alone for one second, can we?

Inara smiles and pilots the ship.

MAL (into comm)
Attention, <monkey feces> slavers. Halt all <monkey feces> slaver proceedings, or I will blow up your little <monkey feces> slaver ship.

INT. SLAVER OUTRIDER – BRIDGE – SAME TIME

Lachlan watches the shuttle approach.

LACHLAN
(chuckling)
He's insane. Like a moth to a flame.

EXT. SPACE – ORBIT ABOVE HAVEN – SAME TIME

Inara's shuttle streaks by the slaver outrider, a near miss.

INT. INARA'S SHUTTLE – COCKPIT – SAME TIME

Mal looks back, trying to watch out the window.

MAL (into comm)
All yours, Mildred.

INT. SLAVER OUTRIDER – BRIDGE – SAME TIME

Lachlan looks confused.

LACHLAN
Mildred?

EXT. SPACE – ORBIT ABOVE HAVEN – SAME TIME

A larger, TRANSPORT SHIP exits atmosphere directly beneath Serenity and the slaver outrider ship. The newcomer bears down on the slaver outrider.

INT. TRANSPORT SHIP – COCKPIT – SAME TIME

Mildred pilots the ship.

MILDRED
Best way to unhook a fish, sometimes, is to just cut the line...

EXT. SPACE – ORBIT ABOVE HAVEN – SAME TIME

The transport ship slams into the grappling lines of the slaver ship. They snap. The transport ship continues forward and crashes into the slaver ship.

INT. SLAVER OUTRIDER – BRIDGE – SAME TIME

Jesse hits the console.

JESSE
Grapplers are gone!

LACHLAN
Retreat!

EXT. SPACE – ORBIT ABOVE HAVEN – SAME TIME

The slaver ship flees.

INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – SAME TIME

Wash eases off the controls and speaks into the comm.

WASH
That you, Mildred?

MILDRED (via comm)
The one and only. Heard you might need an assist. Can't say I'm surprised, you bein' such a mediocre pilot an' all.

WASH
Yeah, well, what can I say, Millie? Flying without an interial dampener'll do that to you.

MILDRED (via comm)
Don't worry. Mal's got what you need. I'll see you and Zoe dirtside.

INT. SPACE – ORBIT ABOVE HAVEN – SAME TIME

Serenity levels off as Inara's shuttle comes in to dock. Mildred's ship breaks away and heads toward the planet's surface.

INT. SERENITY – ENGINE ROOM – SAME TIME

The ship slows in its tilting and shaking. Book rises from the floor and looks down. Isaac is laying still, his eyes glassy, his face slack.

BOOK

Isaac? Isaac, can you hear me?

ISAAC

(mumbling)

Can't feel my left side...

Kaylee steps past Book and Isaac and detaches the cables.

KAYLEE

What's wrong with him?

BOOK

He's having a stroke. Find Simon.

Kaylee rushes out of the engine room. Book kneels next to Isaac, taking his hand.

ISAAC

Shepherd... You're a good man. It's in your heart. Look after my flock...

BOOK

They'll have a good life on Haven. Or wherever they choose.

ISAAC

Was wrong about this ship. Thought it was meant to deliver us, but it... It was meant as a test. For me and for you both, I think.

Book looks away.

Beat.

Isaac's glassy eyes brighten.

ISAAC

(whispering)

The hands of God... Coming to take me home. But they're not white...

EXT. SPACE – ORBIT ABOVE HAVEN – LATER

Serenity, now flying right, enters atmo.

ISAAC (cont'd, VO)
They're blue...

INT. SERENITY – INFIRMARY – SAME TIME

Jayne flexes his right hand, lightly bandaged, and nods to Simon, who is working on the left one.

ISAAC (VO)
Hands of blue...

JUST OUTSIDE

River sits in her chair, looking up the stairs as Derek, Micah, Joshua and Book carry Isaac's body.

RIVER
Two by two... Hands of Blue...

EXT. WHITEFALL – DAY – ESTABLISHING

A ghost town, little more than a small complex of RAMSHACKLE BUILDINGS, sits in a field of dust and scrub.

TITLE: WHITEFALL

EXT. WHITEFALL – EDGE OF TOWN – DAY

Two FIGURES approach a grizzled SENTRY sitting in a rocking chair with a shotgun in his lap.

The Sentry stands as the Figures get closer. We see the Figures from behind. They are dressed in black.

SENTRY
Don't know who you are, but turn yourselves around and go back wherever it is you come from. The man don't see no one uninvited.

He reaches into his suit jacekt and we see that he's wearing BLUE GLOVES. As the Sentry looks on, confused, FIGURE#1 (BLUE HAND#1) pulls out a thick, rodlike DEVICE.

BLUE HAND#1

We have an invitation.

SENTRY

What the—?

BLUE HAND#1 squeezes the device, and a thick spicule extends from each end. It produces a high-pitched HUMMING WHINE.

The Sentry puts his hand to his nose and it comes away bloody. He panics, looking at the two Blue Hands in fear. They watch impassively. The Sentry coughs up blood—

And from the side, a BULLET hits the ground at the feet of the Blue Hands. Blue Hand#1 deactivates the device and puts it away.

VOICE (OS)

I'd appreciate it if you don't kill any of my men.

The Sentry collapses back into his chair, coughing.

BLUE HAND#2

And we appreciate the warning shot...

The Blue Hands look in the direction the shot came from.

BLUE HAND#2 (cont'd)

Agent Dobson.

And indeed it is. LAWRENCE DOBSON stands on one of the buildings, looking down, a sniper rifle in his hands. He's mangy and tattered, worse-for-the wear, with bulky, ugly CYBERNETIC DEVICE covering his right eye and part of his face.

BLACKOUT